

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

By "RITA."

Author of "Dame Durden," "Gretchen," "Darby and Joan," "Sheba," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIII. THE OLD STORY.

GRANNIE did not come in for a long time. She was busy over culinary matters, and, as I learnt afterwards, took Douglas Hay's visit very coolly. "I suppose he's brought some message for the bairn," she said to Jean; and satisfied with that conjecture, left us to entertain each other.

Needless to say, we did that very successfully. Douglas was no laggard lover, and assuredly possessed none of those national virtues of caution and cool-headedness which I had always heard lauded. We were supremely happy that morning. Outside, the rain beat remorselessly on the window panes, and filmy mists and broken gusts of wind showed that the storm was in no mood to clear. But the little drawing-room was, for the time being, a region of enchantment and seclusion.

We did not speak of the future—the present was enough for us, as yet. How wonderful that present seemed! How again and again we asked each other the still inexplicable riddle: "Why do you care? What could have made you think of me—love me? Any one else would have been natural as choice for that divine heart-gift; but not I—not you."

And so on, with all the foolish, happy talk, and doubt, and wonderment that love has ever known, and ever taught.

Presently I told him of my dream. To be softly chided that, even in a dream, I should have learned that sin of doubt.

He was so true; he would always be so true—promises signed and sealed with that "for ever" of love, which means just as much—or as little—as each life may choose.

"Never doubt me, sweetheart; I could not cease to love you, I could not care for any other woman; I know it, I am sure of it. You fancy because you have heard so much against me, that I am fickle. Indeed, indeed I am not. All men are fickle till they find the right woman. Instinct shows her to us; we recognise in a moment what we have been seeking. We are content; we ask no more of any other."

It was sweet to listen to him, sweet to believe the truth of those words, sweet to revel in the wonderment and wherefore of those first steps on love's rosy pathway. Why should we have met; why should we have cared? We agreed it was Fate, or something even kinder and holier—some angel's blessed power that, from our birth, had watched over us and guided us to this supreme moment. Our voices grew lower and softer; eyes said more than speech; heart and soul were filled with a joy almost too deep, too great to bear. From love's divine mood I drew him back to earth again.

"You promised to take me to this witch, Douglas. Did you mean it?"

"Of course, my darling, if you care to come. We will go to-morrow if you like. This rain is too violent to last. You won't be afraid, Athole?"

"Afraid—with you?"

He crossed over to my side, and wound his arms about me. I lifted my face to his.

"Ah, Douglas, you are sure that you love me?"

"As sure as that I live, sweetheart."

"But—before? I am not the only one; you have loved other women—kissed them, perhaps. But I— Oh, Douglas, there has been no one, no one in my life till you came to fill it."

He bent his head on my shoulder.

"Believe me, you are the first woman who has taught me love. As for the past, every man has to live through some experience. But the fancied pleasure is never half so keen, sweetheart, as the regret that follows after—when he knows what the love of a good woman really means, and wishes that, for her sake, he had been stronger and better."

I drew myself away from his arms. My heart felt pained and saddened. Already love was teaching me that vague jealousy, that longing to know who and what has "been before" in the life one loves, which all women feel when once they love.

He saw the cloud, and tried to learn its meaning; but I could not have put my thoughts into words.

"If you should change? If I should lose you—"

"I clung to him in sudden terror. Already, in this short time, to have let my life go out to another, and that other one of which I know so little! It was strange, it was incomprehensible; but, all the same, I knew it was only too true.

"Dearest, do not persist in saying that," he entreated. "Surely I know my own heart, my own feelings. When I saw you first, that night at the Macphersons', I knew, Athole, that I should love you. When I met your eyes in the hall, all full of tears, as I came out, after singing 'Auld Robin Gray,' it seemed as if all my heart went out to you. Oh, darling, if I could only make you believe, if you were only as sure of me as I am of myself—"

The handsome face, the eager eyes, the loving lips, who could resist them? I let myself be convinced, I gave every assurance for which he asked. We were once more happy.

Our interview must have lasted quite half an hour before Grannie came in to disturb us. She was quite cordial and gracious to the young man; accepted his excuse of a message from Bella to me with praiseworthy credulity; sat there by the fire with us as pleasant and cheery as only a sweet and kindly old Scotch lady could be; then insisted that Douglas must stay

for some lunch, and bustled off to see about Jean's preparations in that line.

"It is a shame to deceive her," I said, when we were again alone.

"Shall I tell her, then, and get a decree of banishment?" laughed Douglas.

I shivered.

"Oh, no; but perhaps things might not be so bad as you imagine."

"My dear child," he said, gloomily, "they would be as bad as bad could be. I have no money, no profession, no matrimonial advantages whatever, and I am looked upon with extreme disfavour among the 'unco guid' folk of the town. What could I expect for my audacity in loving you? Not that I care for myself; but 'tis a shame that your visit should be spoilt, and it certainly would be if this were known."

I was easily persuaded. It was much pleasanter to be taken in hand and have things decided for one, than to have to act for oneself. Besides, who at seventeen regards love as the prosaic portal of matrimony? It is an idyl, a dream, a beautiful vague mystery; one does not wish to analyse it, or discuss it. Only to know that it is ours is enough; the present is far too sweet for the future to affect it.

Douglas must have made himself very fascinating indeed, for Grannie actually asked him to drop in with the other young folk on the evening of the dinner party, thereby winning my eternal gratitude, and presenting that festive occasion in a new and much more delightful aspect to my eyes. Douglas's presence would make all the difference to me. I could have hugged the dear old lady, in the access of gratitude and wonder which that unexpected invitation occasioned.

I think even Douglas was surprised; but, needless to say, he accepted it with an alacrity and delight which must have been highly gratifying.

After luncheon he took leave of us—despite the weather. We had arranged between ourselves that we would pay that visit to the Witch of Cawdor on the next afternoon. I knew Grannie was going to Nairn to visit an old friend who was very ill. I should be free to do what I pleased, and could only hope that the weather might favour our plans, and behave with more consideration than it had done to-day.

My last thoughts when I fell asleep that night were of that projected visit. I slept

soundly, dreamlessly, waking with that soft, vague ecstasy of thought that speaks of peace and happy memories.

The weather had changed. The sky was clear and bright once more.

Bella came round after breakfast to see me, and we walked round the garden, lamenting the havoc done to the strawberries and currants. I told her that I was going to the Witch's Cave that afternoon with Douglas—a piece of information she received with great disfavour. But I coaxed her round to her usual good humour at last, and when Grannie departed to the station at midday, I believe she was under the impression that Bella was to take care of me during her absence.

"It is better she should think so," said my cousin; "not that I would be denying anything if she asked me. But she's gone off happy in her mind, the dear old lady, and if I know anything of her, and of Mrs. Mactavish, there'll be such 'havers' and clacketing as never was. She's one of Grannie's pet cronies. I wonder she didn't take you with her. Oh, but she's ill, poor lady."

"Grannie wants me to go to Nairn for the sea-bathing," I said, pulling a half-blown rose from the stem, and fastening it in my dark serge gown; "she thinks it will do me a world of good."

"I dare say she's right. But you look wonderfully better already."

"Oh, I feel quite strong and well," I said, gaily.

"It's just a grand place, this," said Bella, with complacent pride in her right to sing its praises. "Where could you find the like of the air, and the scenery, and——"

"The weather?" I interrupted. "Think of yesterday, Bella."

"It just makes you appreciate to-day all the more, you saucy bit thing. But look, here comes your gallant. Certainly, he is a well-favoured lad, is Douglas Hay; I'm not the one to deny it. But mind, Athole, I've not spared my warnings; take care of your heart."

I laughed; but the colour sprang rosily warm to my face as the welcome figure approached. He looked a little put out when he saw my companion. Perhaps Bella noticed it; at all events she hastened to assure him that she was not going to accompany us on our expedition.

"It's a great deal too far for Athole to walk," she added. "But she's just as

wilful as yourself; so I know there's no use in speaking."

"It's not so far as it looks," said Douglas, cheerily; "and I know a very short cut to the Cave. I found it out accidentally, and I'll take her that way. We've got plenty of time; it's only two o'clock now."

"Well, take care of the child," said Bella, warningly, "or Grannie will be fine and angry with you both. And what's to become of her dinner party if anything happens?" she added, laughingly.

"Do you know I've been invited on that evening?" asked Douglas, with an assumption of dignity and importance that almost rivalled Kenneth's manner.

Bella looked astonished.

"No—really? I believe you're joking. Has he been asked, Athole?"

"Indeed, yes," I said. "Grannie invited him herself."

"Oh, then, you've been forgiven for your misbehaviour," she said, regarding him with evident curiosity.

"Will that Sunday walk ever be forgotten?" he answered, laughing. "One would think it was a criminal offence. You don't happen to have a charm of any sort, do you, to give your cousin, so as to prevent her being spirited away on a broomstick, or some such catastrophe?"

"You're a foolish callant," said Bella, "and only that you've grown so tall and manly, I'd like to box your ears as I used to do."

Then she nodded gaily, and went off down the road to the town, leaving us together.

CHAPTER XIV. THE WITCH'S CAVERN.

THE way might have been long or short. To me it was filled with all the light and perfume of summer, and all the joy, and dreams, and delight of first love.

Douglas was in wild spirits; he told me legends and tales without end—humorous, mysterious, witty, as the case might be.

"Our old servant at home, Janet Scott, is just full of these stories," he said at last. "My childhood and boyhood were well dosed with them, and I didn't dare tell her I didn't believe them."

"Does she know the witch?" I asked.

"Janet? Oh, yes. She's great in favour with her, and many's the bottle of whisky and bowl of oatmeal that finds its way to old Wife Garvie's retreat, I'm thinking."

"But is she really a witch, or is it just a superstition of the folk about here?"

He laughed.

"You had better judge for yourself. If looks mean anything, hers are uncanny enough. She is terribly ugly. However, sweetheart, I'm not going to let her frighten you."

Impulsively I clung to his arm. How bold, and strong, and handsome he was! More than ever I wondered what he could have seen in me to care for—a little, dusky-eyed, insignificant slip of a girl; neither pretty, nor witty, nor brilliant. However, I was too happy to do just more than wonder. It was so plain he did care, so evident in every look and tone that I met or heard.

So we went on arm-in-arm, or hand-in-hand, over rough roads and pathways, climbing stiles, skirting barley fields, drinking in sweet air and golden sunshine, happy as youth, and love, and freedom could make us.

The way was certainly long, but I was conscious of no fatigue. I have but a vague remembrance of how we went, or by what means we seemed to come suddenly upon the cave where the redoubtable witch had made her dwelling-place.

The entrance was concealed by bushes. When Douglas Hay pulled them aside, I saw only a dark recess, which seemed to stretch far away into vaguer depths of darkness. The dripping of water sounded in a monotonous patter in the distance. The cold, and damp, and gloom struck with chilling awe on my nerves and senses. I turned to Douglas in a sudden access of terror and foreboding.

"It is a horrible place. I am sorry I came," I whispered.

"Shall we go away, then?" he asked.

But a sudden shame for my momentary cowardice made me insist on pursuing the adventure. Indeed, just as I stood hesitating there, a rough, harsh voice, from the interior of the cave, demanded our business, and requested us to come in if we wished.

Still clinging to Douglas's hand, I went forward through the darkness, stumbling over the rough, uneven floor, hearing always that monotonous drip-drip of falling water. At last a dull light came into view—the gleam of a peat fire, by which a solitary figure crouched, stretching lean and withered hands to the blaze as if for warmth.

"Come in, come in," crooned a harsh voice. "Ye will na think I dinna ken ye, and the leddy, too. Sit ye doon, baith o' ye. It was a prood day for auld Wife Garvie when the Southern leddy cam to her, and it's mickle she can say aboot the twain o' ye."

There was a rough wooden bench near the fire, and to this Douglas led me, while his cheery voice answered back the old woman's greeting.

As my eyes grew accustomed to the dim light, I looked at her with increased curiosity. A wrinkled, weather-beaten face, gnarled and brown as a tree-stem, wisps of grey hair straying from a not over-clean "mutch," or cap, a garb which seemed composed of any scraps and ends of tattered clothing—man's or woman's—that she had been able to collect, fierce-looking dark eyes, that gleamed redly in the firelight—altogether an ill-favoured and repulsive specimen of feminine humanity.

"I've brought ye a present, wife," said Douglas, presently, as he produced a flask from an inner pocket of his coat. "Something to keep the cold out of your bones."

"Ye were aye a gude callant," muttered the old woman; "and who should ken that better than Meg Garvie, who held ye in her arms your birth-night, and your puir young mither jist giving up the ghaist? But it's a sair fortune for ye, lad, and an ill day for the lass that may love ye. Ye've no' the face nor the look that brings gude to maid or wife; mony's the time I've tell't ye so."

"Come, come, guid wife, none of your ill omens to-day," laughed Douglas. "You'll be frightening the young lady; and I wanted you to cheer her up, and tell her some good of her future, whatever may be your opinion of mine."

The red eyes flashed suddenly and searchingly upon my face. Then the old woman began to rock herself to and fro, every now and then indulging in a sip at the whisky flask while she crooned away, half to herself, half to us, the following mysterious jargon:

"Ill fa's the fate when the young and the auld match together. Ill for the lass is the love o' the lad that woos her sae young and sae trustful; and ill for the lad is the fierce, wild love that he woke wi'out thought, and won wi'out care, and that follows him into the future. Shadows, shadows, shadows, dark and ill, and mony

they lower o'er twain and three, and ill-faured and fearsome the fate o' the braw wooer and the lass that he loves. Faith will na hold, and trust will na stay; dark fa' the clouds o'er the bridal day; pale is the bride, and tearful her 'ee; gane is the bridegroom she dreamt there to see. Faith is nae fause, but loving and loth, the laird and the leddy hae plighted their troth."

I looked at Douglas, only half comprehending the muttered words in their queer accent and occasional lapses into Gaelic.

He was writing them down with pencil and paper, and I afterwards made him give me a copy of them.

"What does she mean?" I whispered.

"Oh, nothing, nothing; do not pay any attention," he said, hurriedly. "She's not in a good temper to-day."

The old woman, still rocking her withered frame to and fro in the firelight, looked in a stupefied, bewildered way at us both.

"I hear ye, Douglas Hay," she said, suddenly; "and ye ken weel that it's na truth ye're speaking. Mony's the time, ye idle, laughing, graceless callant, that I've prophesied to ye the fate I foresaw. Ye love too often and too easy to love well and truly; and mony's the broken heart that ye ken of, and will ken again."

"Hush, hush, wife! speak fair," interrupted Douglas. "I'm not so bad as ye pretend to think me. You'll be frightening the young lady; and, indeed, I'm sorry now I brought her, seeing you're not well-disposed to either of us to-day."

"Ye maun not think that, Douglas Hay. I've no' forgotten ye, a bit bairn that greeted so sair in my auld arms, and the dead mither in the kirk-yard. But there's the black mark i' your line, and your race, lad, and ye'll no' escape, try as ye may. There's ill bluid betwixt fayther and son, and it will aye stir and burn i' your veins, and wax hotter and fiercer, till quarrels and evil shall spring from it, and hame and country shall ken ye nae more."

"Oh, come away, come away!" I cried, in sudden terror at all these horrible prophesies. "Don't listen to her, Douglas—don't. Let us go home. Why, oh, why did you ever bring me here!"

The tears were running down my face—tears of terror and grief, the like of which I had never known. The darkness and gloom of the cave seemed closing round

me, the air felt stifling and oppressive. With a sudden effort, I tried to draw my lover away from the horrible place—away to where the green summer world of wood and sunlight might banish these horrors. But suddenly my strength seemed to fail; my feet refused to stir; something of the feeling that oppresses one in nightmare seemed to stifle and surround me. I gave a faint cry, a gasp for breath as the black darkness seemed to close around.

I remember no more.

When I revived I was lying on the grass supported by Douglas's arms, my face and hair wet with water he had brought from the spring near by. I struggled to my feet, feeling ashamed of my weakness; but the terror of that scene was still upon me, and I looked round afraid I should see that horrible face again, and the evil gleam of the red eyes as they watched me.

"Don't look so frightened," entreated Douglas, "she won't molest us here. Oh, darling, I'm so sorry I took you there. I never dreamt she would be in such a diabolical mood."

I clung to him, faint and speechless. It was something more than mortal fear that chilled my heart, and froze my blood, and left upon me from that hour the dread of impending evil; the certainty that some dreadful fate was in store for me, and that my lover would share in its sorrow.

I did not tell him so; I only clung to him helpless and sad, listening to his cheering words, and trying to believe them, but sure with an inward certainty that defied explanation that evil days were in store for us—that the beauty of our love-dream would be only equalled by its brevity.

Slowly and wearily I retraced my steps. How different the way looked now!

I think the impression borne in upon my mind then and for ever was the impotence of human will against Fate. Something had come between my lover and myself—warning, omen, premonition, call it what you will, but I could neither reason against nor overcome it. We should never be happy, we should know no sweet, smooth stream of wedded love, over which to float our frail bark of happiness. And all his cheering words and loving speeches were of no avail. Heavier and heavier grew my heart as we neared home, and there rang in my ears unceasingly the ill-omened words of the witch: "Ye love too often and too easy to love well, and mony's

the broken heart that ye ken of, and will aye ken again."

It was the same story again—the story which every one had told me of Douglas Hay, and which I would not let myself believe. Swiftly as my love had sprung to life, yet I knew in my own heart that it was a very deep and real thing to me. It meant everything—everything.

A summons had come, and my spirit had flung wide its doors to answer it; childhood and girlhood had fled away, and love had been the birth-kiss of womanhood.

But of such feelings I could not speak. They lay too deep, their joy too nearly touched the border-line of pain, and the shadow of love's wings seemed solemn and mysterious as death, as they stretched over my life and folded me in their close embrace.

Perhaps Douglas grew weary of his efforts to rouse me, perhaps he wisely thought it was best to let my mood have its way; for gradually he ceased to speak, and in silence, and now no longer hand-in-hand, we crossed the hills and meadows to the old stile that had been our trysting-place.

The sky was growing dark and heavy. It was close on sunset, but the clouds in the west were dark and violet-hued, and only a faint line of gold edged their gloom.

"I wish I could cheer you, sweetheart," said Douglas, tenderly. "You look so sad and so wearied. I shall never forgive myself for taking you to that old hag."

I tried to smile and reassure him; but I knew I echoed his wish with all my heart.

Suddenly he started.

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed. "I quite forgot I'm engaged to dine at The Rowans to-night. I'll never get there by seven, surely."

A little jealous pang shot through my heart. I hated to think of his going there; of the fair woman whose tall, lithe grace had so impressed me. And she would have him all to herself, and I should be alone the whole long evening.

He looked at me.

"Why, what is it, little one?" he asked, in surprise, perhaps at my face. I had not yet learnt to mask my feelings.

"I wish—I wish you were not going there," I said, timidly.

"Why? Whatever objection can you have to Mrs. Dunleith? You never spoke to her in your life."

"No!" I said, abruptly, "and I don't wish to do so."

"Why, sweetheart," and there was surprise and pain also in his voice as he raised my face, and made me meet his eyes; "surely you are not jealous—jealous of that woman?"

"Oh, no," I said, mendaciously; "only—only—well, I suppose it sounds selfish, Douglas; but I don't like to think of you laughing, talking, flirting, perhaps, with her, and I so lonely and so miserable here to-night."

"Oh, dearest!" he cried, reproachfully, "you must not think such things of me. They are untrue and unkind, and—and they hurt me, Athole. For Heaven's sake let me think one woman trusts me and believes in me. Every beat of heart, and every thought of mine will be yours, and with you, sweetheart. Don't you feel it?"

The words comforted me, and stifled the jealous pain that was so hard and cruel to bear.

But alas! cruel as jealousy is—un-reasoning, torturing, vain—what love was ever worth the name that loved without it?

FRENCH KINGS AND THEIR DINNERS.

It was in the reign of Charles the Sixth of France that the fine qualities of champagne first approved themselves to the palates of men of taste; among whom we must reckon Wenceslas, King of Bohemia, who, visiting France for diplomatic purposes, took up his residence at Rheims, in May, 1397. There he was induced to try the local vintage, and he found it so good that he devoted three hours daily, from three to six, to getting drunk upon it. At length he was reluctantly compelled to turn his attention to business; but as soon as the treaty was signed—which he had come to France to negotiate—he expressed a strong desire to remain some short time longer in a city which had revealed to him a new pleasure in life. The short time extended to twelve months; so that he spent a year in waiting for the treaty, a year in discussing it, and a year in resting from his labours, and all three years he refreshed himself with "the glorious vintage of champagne."

Francis the First, most *débonnaire* of sovereigns, learned something while he was conferring at Nice with Charles the Fourth

and Pope Paul the Third—he learned the excellence of iced wines. Previously, this use of ice had been unknown in France; and he might therefore claim to have conferred upon his subjects an undeniable “boon.” At all events, a good many Kings have done much less. As for “ices”—the confectioner’s achievements—these were not introduced until about 1660, when a Florentine, named Procope, revealed them to the Parisian public. The café which he founded in the Rue de l’Ancienne is, I believe, still in existence.

It was Catherine de Medicis who taught the noblesse of France to appreciate and imitate the elegance and delicacy of the dinner-tables of Rome and Florence. The developement of an improved cuisine went on through the reign of Henry the Third. Dinner, in those days, was served at ten o’clock in the morning, and supper at four in the afternoon; but before the close of the sixteenth century these hours had been advanced to twelve and seven respectively.

To the first half of this century belongs Rabelais, the great author of “Pantagruel.” He was fond of books and study, of wise and witty talk with congenial souls; but he was partial also to the pleasures of the table. Nor did he disdain a practical joke. Once, when at Paris, desiring an interview with the Chancellor Duprat, and not succeeding in obtaining it, he assumed a green robe and a grey beard, and stalked to and fro before the Chancellor’s door, until his strange dress and conduct drew attention. To enquiries what he wanted, he made no other reply than that he was a skinner of calves, and that all who wished to be skinned should at once come forward. This speech being reported to the Chancellor, he directed his attendant to bring the supposed lunatic into his presence at his dinner hour. On being introduced, Rabelais spoke with so much learning and eloquence on the subject he had at heart, as to win over the Chancellor to his side; and he was speedily seated at his table, an honoured guest.

Having removed to Lyons, Rabelais became a member of the Société Angélique, and thenceforward was never in want of a good dinner, or a friend to share it with. Here it was that he compiled “The Great and Invaluable Chronicles of the Grand and Enormous Gargantua.” Then we trace him in succession to Chinon, Angers, Metz, and Meudon, where he lived from 1549 to 1552. He died at Paris in 1553.

An interesting incident of his life was the literary dinner at Paris, in 1537, given in celebration of the escape of the scholar Dolet from a fabricated charge of murder. All the guests were men of liberal opinions, strenuously opposed to the moral and intellectual dictatorship of Rome, and in addition to Rabelais, there were present the famous scholar, Budé, or Budæus; Bérauld, the grave Protestant tutor of Gaspard de Coligny; Danés, the great Hellenist; Toussaint, called, in allusion to his vast erudition, “the Living Library”; Salmon, who perpetrated a great number of Latin verses; Nicolas Bourbon, tutor of Jeanne d’Albret; and the lyrist and translator of the Psalms, Clement Marot, the Graceful. This was even a more remarkable feast than the one given, some years later, in honour of the production of the first French classical drama, Etienne Lodelle’s tragedy of “Cleopâtre.”

In his great work Rabelais has much to say about eating and drinking, and he speaks as one who loves and understands his subject. He furnishes a very curious and careful enumeration of all the principal wines and dishes known in his time, and dwells with interesting minuteness on the details of the dinners with which his chief characters are concerned. He shows us how Gargantua’s master discoursed at dinner on the nature and properties of the various dishes, with numerous references to Pliny, Athenæus, and other lights of the ancient world. Among the wines which he particularises, his favourites would seem to be those of Auxerre, Minvaux, Canteperdrix, Migranné, and Frontignac.

The cuisine of the Renaissance was no servile imitation of that of Greece or Rome; it did not repeat with wearisome imitation the tasteless dishes and crass sauces of the Byzantine Cury. Reflecting the spirit of the age, it was vigorous, fresh, inventive, full of resource. It assumed the character of a science; it recognised the various demands of the human system. Under the liberal and enlightened patronage of the wealthy nobles, of the rich merchant-princes of the Italian States, who imported into Europe the rare condiments of the East; encouraged by the great ecclesiastical dignitaries, by popes, cardinals, and prelates, its developement was as swift as it was harmonious. Among the gourmands of the period we find such men as Leo the Tenth, Guido, Raffaele—who thought it not unworthy of his genius to design plates and dishes for his Papal

patron—Baccio Bandinelli, and Giovanni di Bologna. Lorenzo de Medici maintained a sumptuous and well-ordered table, to which he invited every visitor of distinction who passed through "Firenza la bella."

The graces of the Italian cuisine became known to the French during their campaigns in Italy; as those of France, five centuries later, were learned by the Cossacks in the Champs Elysées of Paris. Perhaps we shall not err if we date the rise of French cookery as an art from about 1580, in the reign of Henry the Third.

Henry the Third belongs to the numerous class of Royal *bons vivants*, though Nature had made him capable of better things. He was generous and affable, courageous, and capable of tenacious resolves; accomplished in all the exercises which then distinguished a *preux chevalier*; he spoke Latin and Italian fluently, and understood English; excelled in drawing, and was passionately fond of music. So much for the good side of his character. On the other, it must be admitted that he was subtle, treacherous, and cruel, dissipated, and prodigal. In his attire he exhibited the utmost magnificence; his table was luxuriously equipped; but the fantastic puerility of his tastes provoked the contempt of his subjects. He incurred their hatred by his profuse expenditure upon his minions—his chamberlains, as the young cavaliers were called, who shared his pleasures and ministered to his vices.

He was excessively partial to dogs—not to the noble Newfoundland, or gallant mastiff, but to puny, petty lap-dogs, who swarmed in the Royal apartments to the number of a hundred or more. One of his favourite chamberlains, observing how much it cost his unkingly King to select those which were allowed to accompany him in his daily drive with Queen Louise, ingeniously devised a light basket, richly lined with crimson satin, and capable of holding from twenty to thirty of the diminutive pets, which was suspended from the Royal neck.

Henry began the day with a collation of sweetmeats and rolled meats spiced. His dinner consisted of the most exquisite dishes that the ingenuity of his cook could devise. He was as profuse in his expenditure on his table as in that on his dress; and as he changed his attire daily, like our own Queen Elizabeth, so he ex-

pected some novelty every day at his dinner.

His example was imitated by la haute noblesse, and the Prince de Condé, the Duc de Montmorency, Nevers, and de Montpensier, gave the costliest banquets imaginable to hundreds of gratified guests. A taste for luxury spread through all classes.

"The French," writes the Venetian Ambassador in 1578, "never spend money so willingly as when they are purchasing food, and making what they term *bonne chère*. This is the reason why butchers, restaurateurs, pastrycooks, tavern-keepers abound. There is not a street in which you do not find them. Would you purchase meat, either dead or alive? You can do so at any moment. Do you wish your provisions to be sent in dressed? The cooks and pastrycooks, in less than an hour, will furnish you with a dinner or a supper for ten, for twenty, or even for a hundred persons. The *rôtisseur* provides the meat; the pastrycook the pies, tarts, entrées, and dessert; the confectioner contributes the jellies, sauces, and ragouts. The art of gastronomy is so far advanced in Paris that you can order a dinner at any price, from a teston to a crown, or from one crown to twenty crowns. For this latter sum I verily believe you could obtain manna soup, or roast phoenix, or whatever is most precious in the world."

During former reigns, the French had always been permitted to see their Monarch dine in public—as was the case in England down to the Revolution—an inestimable privilege! Good Heavens! what crowds would assemble if the Queen threw open her dining-room at Windsor or Osborne, and the Prince of Wales his *salle-à-manger* at Marlborough House or Sandringham, to the great world of flunkies! Few restrictions, and those only of the simplest kind, limited the entrée into the banquetting hall of the French sovereigns. But Henry the Third established a new code of etiquette, which provided that the King's table was to be guarded by a barrier, and that none but the lords of the household should pass beyond it. These regulations involved him in considerable unpopularity; but he would not allow them to be withdrawn, or even modified.

When he had determined on the assassination of his too powerful subject the Duc de Guise—a crime which was really an act of self-preservation—the latter was not without warnings of approaching danger.

After an angry interview with the King on December the twenty-second, 1588, he found, on returning to his apartments, several anonymous billets on his table containing emphatic recommendations of prudence and precaution. In one of these he read: "Be on your guard; a dangerous attempt is about to be made against your life." The haughty noble smiled, took up a pen, and wrote beneath the lines: "On n'oserait"—they will not dare—and scornfully threw it under the table. Next day, at dinner, a slip of paper lay concealed beneath his plate. It contained another intimation of coming peril. The Duke read it, mused, and exclaimed: "Ce ne seroit jamais fait si je voulois m'arrester à tous ces avis." And he added: "Il n'oserait." But one can hardly help thinking that such a preliminary to a dinner must have spoiled the taste of the dishes, and dulled the flavour of the wine. The Duke, however, seemed to enjoy his meal—unconscious that it was his last. Early the next morning he was summoned to the King's presence. While waiting in the council-chamber, he felt a sudden qualm and sensation of sickness, and opening his *bonbonnière*—which, according to the custom of the time, he carried on his person—found it empty. He thereupon sent a gentleman to the Royal confectioner for some dried sweetmeats, such as Damascus raisins or conserve of roses. Instead, a packet of prunes de Brignoles was sent; of which the Duke ate one—the rest he put into his silver *bonbonnière*. He was then admitted into the ante-room which led into the King's private apartment. There four Gascon gentlemen, whose services Henry had secured, fell upon the great noble, and with six deadly wounds, despatched him.

The chroniclers and ballad-makers record many anecdotes of the geniality and readiness of adaptation to circumstances which made Henri Quatre so popular among his subjects. Not long before the great battle of Ivry, he was lodging in a country house in the character of an inferior officer. The lady of the château was without provisions, but informed her guest that a neighbour of hers rejoiced in the possession of a noble turkey, which he would probably sacrifice as "a roast," if asked to assist in demolishing it.

"Is he a bon camarade?" asked the officer.

"Yes," said the lady, "he is a capital fellow."

So the turkey was obtained, and its

owner invited; and the lady and her two companions devoured the plump and savoury bird from the head to the tail. Fast and furious was the fun; the King's jokes being capped by those of his bourgeois companion, and digestion assisted by peals of merry laughter. At last, the subject intimated that he had recognised his sovereign from the first—and assuredly the marked features of Henri Quatre, when once seen, were not readily forgotten—and expressed a hope that the King would not object to ennoble the humble individual who had had the good fortune to share his dinner with his sovereign. Henry laughed with characteristic good humour.

"And what arms will your lordship be pleased to assume?"

"I will emblazon the turkey to which I shall owe so much."

"*Ventre Saint Gris!*" cried Henry; "a gentilhomme you shall be, as you wish, and shall carry your bird on your shield!"

And thus, in a good dinner off a turkey, originated the noble house of the Comtes Morel d'Inde.

Henry not only liked a good dinner for himself, but wished all his subjects the same enjoyment—at least, once a week. His oft-quoted aspiration was to the effect that every peasant might have a fowl in his pot-au-feu for his Sunday dinner. It was he who first allowed the *traiteurs*, or eating-house keepers, to form a guild under the title of "*Maître queux cuisiniers portechapes*"—1599. He was partial to melons; and one day when he was at dinner, his *maître d'hôtel* entered with a golden vessel full of the luxurious fruit.

"This is delightful," cried the genial King; "to-day I will have a surfeit. Melons never harm me, if I eat them, as the doctors order, on an empty stomach and before meat."

His favourite drink was le vin d'Arbois; and Sully tells how at the grand dinner he gave on being raised to a dukedom, Henry unexpectedly appeared; and as the servants delayed in serving the dinner, appeased his hunger with some oysters and a draught of good Arbois wine.

But his favourite wine at dinner was the vin de Suresnes, and when he wished to show his predilection for a courtier or to do anybody a kindness, he invariably sent him a present of this wine.

It came from the vicinity of Vendôme, on the ancient patrimony of the King, where a kind of grape, usually known as Suren, yielded this very agreeable

white wine. Henry had it sent to Paris to supply his table. What the King drank, of course his courtiers drank, and throughout his reign the fashionable drink was this vin de Suresnes. In the Vendômois still flourishes a vineyard with the name of Clos de Henri Quatre.

The chequered reign of this gay and gallant Monarch—who could be a bon vivant when he had the opportunity, or live like an anchorite if circumstances required it—was marked by two or three notable dinners of historical importance.

During the siege of Laon, being misinformed as to the whereabouts of the Spanish army which had been despatched to its relief, Henry invited some of his officers and courtiers to dine with him at Saint Lambert, a house of his own, in the midst of the neighbouring forest, whither, in the days of his youth, he had frequently gone to feast upon fruit, fresh milk, and cheese. Thither they accordingly repaired, to the number of thirty, and dined heartily on such fare as the King's cook could muster in a camp. After dinner, Henry, who, having spent part of the preceding night in examining the trenches, batteries, and mines, was much fatigued, fell asleep.

"The day was extremely hot," says Sully, "and eight or ten of us sought a cool retreat in the densest shades of the wood Foulumbray, which lies at a little distance from the high-road between La Fore and Laon. We had not proceeded more than twelve or fifteen hundred paces, when a noise from the side of La Fore induced us to listen attentively. It seemed a medley of human voices, neighing horses, clanging whips, and the remote sounds of drum and trumpet. We advanced as far as the high-road to hear more distinctly, and then saw, at a distance of about eight hundred paces, what appeared to be a column of foreign infantry, marching silently, and in good order. The noise we had heard proceeded from the servants and camp-followers, and the drivers of a considerable force of artillery. Carrying our survey as far as possible, we saw so great a number of troops defiling after these waggons that we no longer doubted that the whole army of the enemy was in front of us."

They returned in all haste to the King, who, just awakened, was shaking a plum-tree, the fruit of which he had relished at dinner.

"Pardon, Sire," said Sully, "we have just seen some people passing who are

getting ready for you a different kind of plum, much more difficult of digestion."

In as few words as possible, for there was no time to be lost, he explained the position of affairs.

Henry immediately despatched a dozen officers, who were at hand, with orders for the different detachments of cavalry to fall in upon the centre; while others were directed to form the infantry into battalions, and post them so as to cover the siege works. Having given these commands, he mounted his horse, and proceeded to superintend their execution, which was effected with such promptitude and presence of mind that when the Spanish army arrived upon the ground, they found the French fully prepared to receive them, and refrained from delivering the attack they had meditated. Thus was averted a surprise which might have ended in the defeat of Henry, and entirely changed the fortune of the war. In which case Henry might have had good reason to regret his dinner à la champêtre, and the delicious plums that formed a part of it.

In the story of Henry's passion for the beautiful Gabrielle d'Estrées there is an element of romance which has always rendered it attractive to the popular mind.

The King of "the snow-white plume" was somewhat of a free lover, and many a fair face had charmed in succession his vagrant fancy; but for Gabrielle his devotion was deeper, and more lasting. In 1599 he pledged himself to obtain a dissolution of his marriage with his frail Queen, Marguerite de Valois, and entered into negotiations with Rome for this purpose, much to the dissatisfaction of his minister, Sully, and the jealous discontent of many of his most influential nobles. On the approach of Easter he sent Gabrielle from Fontainebleau to Paris, where she lodged at the house of Zamet, the celebrated financier. Three days afterwards, Zamet, who was an acknowledged gastronome, entertained her at a dinner which, from the account given of it by La Vourenne, one of the guests, must have been organised on a really splendid scale. Gabrielle played her part at it with her accustomed grace, and when it was over repaired to a neighbouring convent to hear the Tenebræ service. In the midst of her devotions she was seized with a sudden illness, and had to be moved in haste to Zamet's house, where violent spasms and internal pains subjected her to continual suffering. As if suspecting treachery, she cried incessantly: "Take me

away from this house"; and at length, in obedience to her wishes, she was conveyed to her aunt's residence at Saint Germain l'Auxerrois. The physicians, however, could do nothing to assuage her agony, and, two days afterwards, she expired. Decomposition set in immediately, and its rapid progress, and the physical appearances—to say nothing of the symptoms of her illness—the convulsions, the giddiness, the burning in the throat—all tended to strengthen and confirm the popular belief that her death was the result of a poison administered at Zamet's dinner-table. The historian, Mezerai, gives credence to the tale, and a later writer, M. de Fiévolle, supports it by a mass of evidence which it is difficult to set aside.

The reign of Louis the Thirteenth presents no special incidents to arrest the progress of the historian of the Dinner.

The age of Louis Quatorze, of which Voltaire has left us so highly-coloured a picture, was the age of dinners and diners. The society of the salons was also the society of the dinner-table; and the men and women, so highly distinguished by their conversational gifts, their intellectual agility, and their enjoyment of the amenities of social life, were by no means disinclined to appreciate the savour of a ragout or a salmi, or the aroma of Châblis or Bordeaux. Their dinners and their petits soupers helped to draw closer the ties of social intercourse. Neither the Duchesse du Maine, nor the Princesse de Conti, nor the Maréchale de Luxembourg forgot that the wit, the poet, the statesman, and the beauty could not live wholly on the air and fire of which Nature, according to Madame Graffigny, compounded the French race. And even in the less luxurious circles of Madame du Deffand, Madame de Tencin, Madame de Lambert, Madame Geoffrin, and Madame Necker, the duty of ministering to the corporeal appetites of their guests was by no means ignored nor neglected.

Here one is led to put the obvious question, Was there ever, at any time, or in any nation, so many brilliant women gathered together as at Paris in the eighteenth century? We make a great fuss over our lady scholars, over the products of Girton and Newnham—all honour to them!—but it is idle to talk as if the intellectual resources of women had but recently been discovered. We have only to recall the French salons, and the gifted women who assembled round them the

most eminent men of the day, successfully holding their own in the collision of quick intellects, in the gay tournament of minds, to own that they formed a galaxy of unsurpassed and unsurpassable radiance.

The life of the salon found, perhaps, its most splendid representative in Louise Bénédicte de Bourbon, Duchesse du Maine—grand-daughter of the great Condé, and wife of Louis the Fourteenth's favourite son by Madame de Montespan. A woman of great abilities, she was also a woman of great ambitions, and plunged into the stormy waters of intrigue in the hope of placing herself and her husband on the throne to which they were so near. When she perceived that her dream would never be fulfilled, she turned with equal eagerness to a career of amusement—of the intellectual and imaginative amusement which befitted her cultivated tastes. At Sceaux she held her Court, ruling over it with imperious sceptre. She believed in herself, as the Baronne de Staël shrewdly said, without examination or discussion, and all her guests were expected to share in the same belief.

"I am fond of company," she said, "for I listen to no one, while everybody listens to me."

The famous "Nuits Blanches" were the talk of the time. Neither at Trianon nor Versailles were the festivities so diversified, so graceful, and so enchanting. After a dinner which exhausted all the resources of the contemporary cuisine, her guests assembled at eight to listen to music, to criticise dramatic performances, to improvise verses to popular airs, to act proverbs, to read their own poems, or yawn while their convives read theirs. The Academician, Sainte-Aulaire, wrote society verses; the Abbé Genest said witty things; the scholarly Malézieux translated Sophocles and Euripides; Voltaire sometimes flashed like a comet across this firmament of many stars, and wrote tales during the day, which he read to the Duchesse and her circle at night. All joined in inventing mythological or pastoral banquets and fêtes, in which they were at one time gods and goddesses, at another shepherds and shepherdesses—which combined the ingenuity of the artist, the fancy of the poet, and the magnificence of the costumier. No expense was spared; the dinner was as rich and rare as the spectacle that succeeded it.

"She was born," said Madame du Deffand, "with the most fascinating

qualities and the most abominable defects that God ever gave to one of His creatures." This free utterance referred to Claudine Alexandrine Guérin de Tencin, who, for a brief period, was a favourite of the Regent—until she ventured upon politics—and afterwards presided over the entertainments of the notorious Dubois. Among her admirers were Bolingbroke and Fontenelle. To the latter she said :

"It is not a heart which you have there," laying her hand on the region usually occupied by that organ, "but a second brain."

Fontenelle's heart and brain, however, were really in his stomach !

Tencin's conversational charm and intellectual activity made her a social power for many years. She drew to her feet the wits and savants of Paris, whom she playfully called her *ménagerie*. She gave them a couple of dinners a week, and at New Year's Day sent each of them two ells of velvet, to be made into the breeches they were expected to wear at her réunions. Those réunions Marmontel, the novelist, shall describe to us. He had been invited to read at one of them his last new tragedy :

"I found assembled there Montesquieu, Fontenelle, Maïran, Marivaux, the young Helvetius, Astruc, and others, all men of science or letters, and, in the midst of them, a woman of brilliant intellect and profound judgement, who, with her kind and simple exterior, had rather the appearance of the housekeeper than of the mistress. This was Madame de Tencin. . . I soon discovered that the guests had come there prepared to play their parts, and that their anxiety to shine sometimes prevented the conversation from pursuing a natural and easy course. Every person tried to catch upon the wing the passing moment, that he might interpose his mot, his anecdote, his smart saying, or dash in a flavour of his lightest persiflage ; but the necessity of being on the alert to seize the fugitive opportunity—which might not recur—made the contribution sound artificial. The impatience of Marivaux to show off his finesse and his sagacity was conspicuous. Montesquieu awaited with more composure for the ball to come within his reach. Maïran watched for his turn. Astruc did not condescend to wait. Fontenelle also allowed it to come without seeking for it ; and the attention he commanded he used with so much discretion, that his witty saying or clever story never

lasted more than a minute. As for the alert but reserved Helvetius, he listened, and listened, collecting material for future use."

Is not this a brilliant picture of a literary symposium ?

"She knew my tastes," said Fontenelle, when Madame de Tencin died, in 1749, "and always put before me the dishes I loved best. It is an irreparable loss—her death."

The reader will expect me to quote the favourite anecdote of Fontenelle and his asparagus. He preferred his asparagus dressed with oil ; but his friend, the Abbé Terrasson, liked them with butter. The latter coming to dine with him one day, Fontenelle unselfishly ordered that half the asparagus should be dressed his way, and the other half Terrasson's. Just before sitting down to table, the Abbé was struck down by apoplexy, whereupon Fontenelle rushed out of the room, and shouted to his cook :

"All with oil ! All of it with oil !"

Asparagus, I may add, was highly esteemed by the Marquise de Pompadour ; and a mode of preparing it, invented by M. de Jarente, is still in vogue as *Asperges à la Pompadour*.

In the early times of Feudalism, in the comradeship and chivalrous simplicity of the camp and the castle, the King's nobles served him with their own hands, some providing for his household, others bringing dishes to his table, others disrobing him at night, and others looking after his falcons and horses. In a later age, under Cardinal Mazarin, and during the troubles of the Fronde, they formed his body-guard—an escort of armed gentlemen, sometimes three and four hundred in number—ever ready to protect him amid "the rude exigencies of constant danger." Later still, while equally assiduous in their attendance on his person, they lost their military character ; they ceased to be useful, and became merely decorative ; were absorbed in the pomp and circumstance by which Louis the Fourteenth thought to strengthen, but really weakened, the monarchy. It must be admitted, however, that while it lasted, the regal pageantry was very imposing, and Louis being a consummate actor, the scenic effects were always well studied. The "Court," as it was then constituted, numbered between two and three thousand persons. These were the King's society—the ladies who courtesied before him, the

gentlemen who accompanied him in his carriage, and buzzed like gilded flies about his chamber; and they all had their *hôtels* or pavilions at Versailles, close to the grandiose and spacious palace which, at the bidding of Louis le Grand, the genius of Mansard had developed out of the modest *château* which Luten had built for Louis the Thirteenth.

The household was on a scale proportionate to the numbers of the Court and the vastness of the Palace. In the stables alone were employed one thousand four hundred and fifty-eight men, including pages, grooms, laced pupils, silver-button pupils, cooks, and valets. This fact will give the reader an idea of the extent of other departments; and I must confine myself to the one which is connected with my present theme.

There were three sections of the table-service: 1. For the King and his younger children; 2. for the Grand Master, the Grand Chamberlain, and the Princes and Princesses living with the King; and 3, the "great ordinary," for the Grand Master's second table, that of the King's butlers, the almoners, the gentlemen-in-waiting, and that of the valets-de-chambre—in all, three hundred and eighty-three officers of the table, and one hundred and three waiters, at an annual cost of two million one hundred and seventy-seven thousand seven hundred and seventy-one livres.

Then Madame Elizabeth's table cost three hundred and eighty-nine thousand one hundred and seventy-three livres, and that of Mesdames, one million and ninety-three thousand five hundred and forty-seven livres.

The supply of wine came to three hundred thousand francs per annum; that of meat, game, and fish, to one million livres.

The officials of the kitchen, its hierarchy, comprised an almost incredible number of grades—butlers, comptrollers, and comptroller-pupils, clerks, and gentlemen of the pantry, cup-bearers and carvers, officers and equerries of the kitchen, chief cooks, assistant cooks, scullions, turnspits, and cellarers, common gardeners and salad gardeners, laundry servants, pastry-cooks, plate-changers, table-layers, and crockery-keepers—"an entire procession of broad-braided backs and majestic round bellies, which, with order and conviction, exercised their functions before the sauce-pans and around the buffets."

AT HOME ON THE ROLLING TIDE.

THE POLICE.

WHEN one hears the words, "A life on the ocean wave, a home on the rolling tide," one may well think that a home on the River Thames should be included under the latter head. Surely, if the tide rolls anywhere, it is in the lower reaches of the Thames. See how it rushes and swirls past the piers of the bridges, bearing with it an endless procession of barges, now laden to the water's edge, now returning light for more freight; see how it rolls and plunges among the tiers upon tiers of shipping filled with portable property, easy of removal, and very often entrusted to the guardianship of the least watchful of caretakers. The tide rolls up and down with all its precious burden unceasingly; unceasing are the devices of the numerous tribes of river thieves to take advantage of any chance of plunder.

It may be interesting to see how the criminal classes—who get their living like that honest labouring man, Mr. Riderhood, by the "sweat of their brow," on the river—are looked after by the authorities, whose particular care they are.

We are all accustomed to the sight of the police about the streets of London, and their duties are well in view of the public; but the Thames division of the Metropolitan Police is little known or thought of except by those whose business lies about the docks and on the river.

The Thames Police was formed in 1797 by a body of merchants combining together and forming a fund for the protection of property on the river; and most certainly some such step was necessary if the statistics of the founders of the force were correct. The number of riverside thieves, in those days, is said to have been eighty thousand; though how they were numbered is not quite obvious, for they certainly would not offer themselves for a census. If the figures are correct, riverside people must have had a lax sense of the rights of property in those days, for, to make up the number, surely almost everybody employed on the river must have been included. Let us hope the estimate was a very exaggerated one. In those days the force was an armed one, carrying cutlasses—a precaution which, if it was really necessary, would go far to show that, anyhow, things must have been in a bad way.

In 1829, the Thames Police became amalgamated with the Metropolitan Police, and became the Thames Division. The Division consists in all of two hundred and one men, including a superintendent, inspectors, sub-inspectors, and constables; and, as their duties extend from Fulham to Barking Creek, the number does not seem too many.

They have their headquarters at Wapping, with stations at Waterloo Bridge, on the Embankment, at Blackwall, and a cutter, the "Spray," at Erith. This is a good deal of ground, or, rather, water to watch. When one remembers that the river is full of barges, which are left at night with no one on board, it is easily seen that the work is not a sinecure. So well is it done, however, that petty thefts from barges have been almost stopped. To prevent these depredations is the principal work of the police; but it is by no means all. The force does a great deal in the saving of life, both in accidents and suicides; it assists the Thames Conservancy in the carrying out of their rules; and it does the same for the lightermen's societies. The river police also seem to be regarded by the riverside population as general sources of knowledge and information as to time, tides, and weather; and also as guides as to where different ships are lying, what they are loaded with, and so on.

The work is done in watches of six hours each—every man having six hours' duty and twelve hours off; but as, if all boats from Wapping were to have to be there at, for instance, six a.m., the further parts would be utterly unprotected, the boats of the watch are divided into three divisions: one division starts at twelve, and remains till six; the next division at two, and remains till eight; and the final division at four, and remains till ten, and so on.

Thus, of course, boats are always out, and all congregating at one spot at the same time for relief is avoided. The ordinary duty boats carry two constables and one sub-inspector, which rank answers to a sergeant in the land police. In addition to the duty boats, a patrol boat is out throughout every watch, starting at midnight, at six a.m., at noon, and at six p.m., manned by an inspector and three men. This boat is out to see that the duty boats are doing their watch work properly. In addition, there is, at the Waterloo Station, a steam-launch, for work mostly between Fulham

and London Bridge. The work must be terribly trying in the winter—six hours in a boat on a winter's night, with snow or sleet falling, and a cold wind blowing, must be something terrible.

Fogs make it very dangerous, for out the boats go in any fog, so long as they can just scratch along. Of course, if it is impossible to see at all on the river, they have to do their beat on land, and it is to be supposed that if it is too bad for the police it must be too bad for any of the boats to be out, and that in this way, the bad weather "cuts both ways." A little case which happened the day before I went down to Wapping will show what a fog on the river means. The inspector who came off duty at six in the morning, lives opposite Wapping, and started to be rowed across in the fog. His men pulled some time, and then, to their surprise, found they had pulled the boat round, and were at their starting-point. Starting again, almost the same thing happened, and they finally landed about a hundred yards below the station.

Having thus set forth the routine of work, and the mode of carrying it on, let me give a short account of a trip with the night watch—that is from twelve midnight to six a.m. Having obtained permission from the Chief Commissioner, and arranged a day—or rather night—with the superintendent, I found myself in course of time at Charing Cross Station, on the Underground, undecided as to whether I should go or not. The last two days had been very foggy, and although it had considerably cleared off in town, yet there was no saying what it might be at Wapping. A little fog might add a picturesqueness to the night, but too much fog might shut out everything from view, and there was nothing attractive about the idea of being landed down at Wapping at a little before midnight, with nothing to be seen, and no train back till somewhere about six in the morning. However, I determined to go, and took my ticket, and down to the platform I went.

There are not many people bound eastwards; but the platform opposite gradually fills up with people bound homewards from the theatres, and one cannot help thinking over what a wide district does the Underground Railway now distribute them, and wondering what they all did for amusement in the days before the District Railway brought Charing Cross within reach of all outlying London. But

the arrival of my train puts an end to meditation on these things, and away we go, past the Temple and through the City. How thick the stations are here! It seems almost as if the last carriage can hardly have left one station before the engine reaches the next. Then comes Mark Lane, the station for the Tower; then Aldgate, where we branch off from the Circle; through Whitechapel and Shadwell, where my carriage stops opposite a bill concerning cheap excursions to the Broads—I should not have thought the inhabitants of Shadwell went much on such excursions—and then, with a screaming, headlong plunge into the earth, we reach Wapping Station, which is at one end of the old Thames Tunnel, now utilised for railway purposes. I never saw a station with so many stairs to reach the upper air—a tall, circular staircase running round the sides of a deep shaft. Arriving at the top, I ask my way of the porter, and plunge into the streets.

It is as well that I asked first, and did not wait till I got outside, for anything more deserted than this street—almost shut in on both sides by tall warehouses—would be difficult to find. Eventually, chancing on two men standing by what I discovered in the morning, as I came back, to be stairs leading down to the river, I again asked if I was right, and, by way of an answer, was asked if I wanted a small boat. This naturally brought reflections as to who could possibly want a small boat in that part of the river at twelve o'clock at night. Do belated seamen make use of them to reach their craft, or do people use them to cross the river, as if they were a sort of aquatic night cab? Anyhow, the business can hardly be a profitable one at midnight.

About a hundred yards further on is the blue light of the station. Turning up the alley to it, I first walk into an apparently deserted house; there is certainly no one on the ground-floor. The house turns out to be the living place of the single men. Proceeding a little further up the alley, I reach the station proper. Very unlike the ordinary London policemen are these men, with their shiny hats and long-sleeved waistcoats. They seem, somehow, a much older set of men than those we are accustomed to see about the streets, and are somewhat silent as they wait their turn for the boats. Making my way into the office, I find the inspector

on the night-patrol whose companion for the night I am to be.

The station is small, for much room is not required—prisoners are, as a rule, taken to the land-station nearest to the place they are taken. There seem to be but two rooms—the office, which differs in few respects from any ordinary office; and the men's assembling rooms, with the walls hung with a thick dado of water-proofs and shiny hats, which look as if nothing in the way of wet could penetrate them. Off this room opens the passage from which the cells are entered. There are but two—exactly alike, except that one has a wooden floor and the other one of asphalt. The wooden floor is used for drunken people, and others who are liable to fall off the benches which run round the cell—wood being considered softer falling than asphalt. A straw mat for a pillow, and—a great luxury—a rug are all the moveable furniture. The cells are warmed by pipes running round; and a bell is provided, to summon the officer in charge if needed.

But it is time to be off, so we make our way outside, and the Thames at night comes in view. The fog has quite cleared away, and, considering that there is no moon, it seems at first pretty bright; but we soon find it dark enough in the sheltered parts; and, till my eyes grow accustomed to it, I find it very difficult to distinguish shadow from substance. But though it is past midnight, things are by no means quiet. There is plenty of movement—tugs panting along with their strings of barges; barges drifting and sailing; and occasionally a large steamer, slowly making its way through the crowd. All carry lights, which seem, some of them, like stars, the light on the mast-head being placed as high as possible, to avoid confusion with the riding-light, which is only a few feet from the deck. A peculiar effect on a dark night, when one can hardly see a string of barges, is the tug with its lights, and then the one light on the hindmost barge, which alone of the barges carries a light; and in the dark this light has an appearance of roaming about at its own sweet will, with no connection with anything. And then the noises! Surely the man who invented the horrible whistles of a steamship does not deserve well of his fellow-men; some of them, with a wail and a whoop, are most fearful sounds, and seemed to me to continue all night, even when I could see nothing

moving. People get used to anything; so I suppose these sounds do not disturb the sleep of those who have their homes on the rolling tide.

Before we embark, I am told that the station lies between two places of very different associations. One is Wapping Old Stairs and the other Execution Dock—the place of execution for pirates and such like. What a contrast! On one side, all that was light and gay on the river when the river was a common mode of locomotion; the other, grimly recalling one of the most terrible phases of maritime life.

How dark the stairs of the station are to one unaccustomed to the blackness of night! Thinking there would be a landing-stage at the foot of them, however, I proceed jauntily down them, and if one of the men had not just then showed a light, I am afraid I should have covered myself with ignominy by walking quietly into the river. But prevented from this just in time, I step into the boat and take my seat in the stern, followed by the inspector, who takes the rudder-lines, and away we go, the three men pulling randan.

We pull up the river, keeping on the Middlesex shore for some distance, first having a look at Wapping Old Stairs; and very unattractive and unpoetical they look in this light. We go with the tide, without too much work; for we are bound to Waterloo Bridge, and it will be a long pull back against the tide. We keep at first along the Middlesex shore, and do not waste time in looking about much, keeping that for later on. We presently cross over to the Surrey shore, however, and pass under the beginnings of the Tower Bridge, of which there is not very much to be seen in the darkness of the night, then we pass the scene of the Great Tooley Street fire—now a huge pile of warehouses—and soon we shoot London Bridge. Here we crossover, and, in the crossing, make our first visible acquaintance with the force of the tide in rather a curious way to one ignorant of the strength and ways of such things. As we cross, of course the tide takes us a little up, and out of our straight line, when suddenly we are caught and whirled down by an eddy, apparently to run into one of the piers of the bridge; but no, this seems quite the usual way of proceeding, as the inspector tells me that by using the eddies they can always get across without being driven out of the straight course.

Behind the steamboat-pier we come across the first duty boat we have met,

and having hailed her, row on, still up past all the silent City. Indeed, this is one of the most striking points about this trip—the absence of all sound from the shore, except where the great railway stations are, which seem never at rest. All other sounds seem quite shut out, as are all the buildings, except stray glimpses of especially high ones, by the huge warehouses. Still on, we presently pass the three-fold bridges at Blackfriars. So dark do they make the water that they are lighted up beneath. Terribly dark they must have been before the lamps were fixed! Now we leave all signs of the business of the riverside, at least on the Middlesex shore, where we are, and break in upon the Embankment, which looks, even in this light, a noble thoroughfare. And so we come to the Waterloo Bridge Police Station.

Here we land, and inspect the office. This station exists almost entirely as a life-saving station, the Embankment and Waterloo Bridge being, apparently, the chosen spots for suicides. Last year one hundred and eleven bodies—thirty known accidents, thirty known suicides, the remainder undecided—passed through the hands of the Thames Police. Fancy fifty-one bodies found in a year in the river, with no one knowing how they got there; fancy those other bodies which drift away seaward without being found or numbered at all! And how things drift on the river! A woman's body was found one morning at Blackwall. She was proved to have been seen talking to a friend at Kensington at twelve at night, and to have thrown herself from Lambeth Bridge. She had drifted down in a little over seven hours! As to determined suicides there are no end of stories. For instance, a man jumps over a bridge having tied his thumbs together—he was rescued by a police-boat which happened to be lying under the bridge; another man half strangles himself with a piece of string before jumping over; another, as soon as he is rescued, jumps in again; and so on almost indefinitely.

Here is the room to which half-drowned people are taken, with all appliances for reviving them. It contains a bath with hot water, a bed, and such things as hot-water bottles and kettles. Then the boat used to save people is pointed out—short and very broad, and fitted with a roller in the stern to assist in hauling one into the boat. Then the cell is shown me, and one

of the men boasts that it is the most comfortable in London. It certainly did not strike me as differing much from those at Wapping. In the office is a stone, or rather a bit of stonework, which a young gentleman of tender years had a yearning to heave off a bridge into a boat; luckily he was prevented, for most certainly it is big enough to make a hole in any boat like ours. It seems stones are often sent over at boats on the river, though not quite as heavy as this one.

But it is time to be off again, and saying good morning—which sounds rather odd before one has gone to bed—we push off towards the Surrey shore. And now we go more slowly, the tide being against us, and we proceed with our lantern constantly flashing over barges lying against the warehouses, and all laden with goods—flour, coffee, jute, cotton, wool, iron, coal, and, in fact, almost every imaginable article of commerce. Soon we come to Southwark Bridge, and just below is a little bit of what is supposed to have been one of the old Southwark taverns—only a door opening out on what may be supposed to have been a verandah, and a faint indication of where the steps were once.

As we get further on we notice the number of stairs which run down to the river; and these it is that help to make the work of preventing petty thefts the more difficult, for the big warehouses often have these stairs close by them. The barges lie in the shadows close under the warehouses. It seems not very difficult to help oneself from a barge and make one's escape by these stairs. But, nevertheless, the vigilance of the police has almost put a stop to this sort of business by patrols on the river, and by catching the receivers on land. It is very simple and clear that if the receivers are caught, the goods are of no use to a thief.

Very noticeable on this shore is a bit of old Rotherhithe, which has not yet been converted into warehouses, and which looks very quaint and picturesque amongst all its surroundings. There is a similar bit on the other shore, at Limehouse. And then we come to the entrance to the Surrey Commercial Docks, and now we transfer our attention again to the Middlesex shore, and row past Shadwell Fish Market, London Docks, Regent's Canal Dock, and West India. Out of the South West India Docks is coming a large steamer, and hovering about are half-a-dozen wherries on the chance of a job in the way of carrying

a rope ashore, and so on. A rough life for the boatmen who have to be on the look-out at this time of the morning—but a good deal of the bread that has to be picked up off the waters of the Thames is hardly enough earned.

We wait a little here before crossing over, the mind of the inspector being rather perplexed as to whether a large steamer coming down will not run down a sailing barge. "If I don't see her port-light in a moment, she must be into her." However, the port-light soon appears and, anxiety being removed, we cross over; and here we soon seem to lose the large warehouses, and find ourselves in Greenwich. Here we land and walk round the Hospital, and a little way into the town. How deserted it all is! but evidently it is getting time for people to be about, for here is the coffee-stall man setting out his wares. This little walk is very pleasant; for, to my surprise, on getting out of the boat, my teeth are chattering, and I find myself extremely cold. But the brisk walk soon sets me right, and when we embark again I am as warm as possible.

When we start again we turn the boat's nose up stream, keeping the Surrey shore. Here, instead of the docks, we pass under several piers; one belongs to the Foreign Cattle Market; another to the Metropolitan Asylums Board, for embarking fever passengers to the Hospital Ship; luckily, by the time the pier was ready, and the steamers were lying there, the small-pox diminished, and they were hardly at all wanted; then we have the pier of the Naval Victualling Department. And around all these piers are laden barges and handy stairs. One set of stairs I am shown, where there are a good many wherries, and I am told that these stairs are a resort of a set of paltry thieves. When one is caught he can only get a month or so, and as soon as he is let out he is back at his old game. This game is stealing coal. The men drop down to where a ship is coaling, take their fill from a barge, and cover the coal with slime, to give it the appearance of having been dredged for; then, returning to shore, they can easily dispose of it, for coal is a difficult thing for the man who has been robbed to swear to.

We cross again, and soon find that barges have not ceased moving, for here are two steamers, inside which we passed going down, and all about them now a crowd of barges, which have come down loaded to

transfer their burdens to the outward-bound vessels. Morning and work-time must be getting near, for there are men moving about on board, as if it would not be long before the work of unloading and loading would begin.

And, truly, daylight is beginning to show; and as we pass Shadwell Market it is five o'clock, and the bell rings, and work immediately begins—the work of unloading boats which came up the river yesterday afternoon from the North Sea fishing fleets. Soon it gets lighter and lighter, and the Wapping Police Station is in sight, and we soon pull up to it, having had a fine night for our work, although nothing exciting has happened. But, still, it was enough to give me some insight into the workings of the Thames Police; and very hard work it must be—six hours' pulling must be no joke.

There is over half an hour before my train goes, so I stand on the top of the stairs watching the daylight growing stronger and stronger, and gradually putting out the lights of the steamers and factories, which have been at work all night—flour-mills, lead-refining works, seed-crushing mills, gasworks, and others, which seem to work always. And soon the light discovers a steamer moored just above the station, which has come up during the night, and which is already unloading. Truly, there is no waste of time here!

But it is time for me to seek my train, so, bidding good morning to my late companion, and turning out into the streets, not quite as deserted now as last night, and reaching the station, I am soon whirled back to town.

Just two anecdotes to conclude with: one as to the calm impudence, and the other as to the stupidity, of river thieves.

In the first case, the theft was that of a whole barge loaded with potatoes, which was taken away bodily, and conveyed to a spot where all sorts of goods were in the habit of being landed, and the cargo sold. I believe the thieves were eventually captured.

In the second, the inspector, seeing the sides of a barge all wet, and a wherry alongside, went on board and found a man there. The barge was laden with hogsheads of wine, and there was apparently nothing to excite suspicion. Looking about, however, the inspector noticed a barrel with a new spigot in it. Turning to the man, he asked, sharply:

"What have you done with the gimlet?"

"I throwed it overboard when I seed you coming, guv'nor," said the man, who seemed afterwards quite surprised to find how completely he had "given himself away."

MONEY, DEAR MONEY!

THE youth who declares he despises money will probably die a miser.

To be sure, one may hunt for a long time to find such a youth. Even the most virtuous of boys may, except in quite phenomenal cases, be tempted from the right path—with a bribe.

"Did you, or did you not, help Raymond Jones with his exercise, John Bonus?"

"Say you didn't, and you shall have a shilling on the holiday day," whispers Jones to Bonus.

Bonus has heretofore never, to his knowledge, told a lie, or even equivocated. Yet he replies, "No, sir!" with the coolness of a general.

The preciousness of pence is one of the first facts realised by the infant intelligence. It is wonderful with what avidity one's nephews and nieces watch the movements of one's hands in the direction of one's pockets. It is as easy as seeing to know what is going on in their unregenerate little minds. It is something to this effect: "He gave us a shilling each and a rocking-horse the last time. But that was ever so long ago—quite six months. We've grown such a deal since then, that he can't think of giving us less than half-a-crown each now. Oh, if only he would be quick about it!" If the inconsiderate uncle pulls out a shilling apiece, instead of the half-crown, it is much the same as if he had boxed his young relations' ears. They may shed tears copiously—to his supreme amazement.

The preciousness of pounds is one of the facts that lingers latest in the muddled old mind of the man who has been given up by the doctors. 'Tis in vain that the clergyman exhorts him to think of something better.

You can judge, too, how the land lies by the senile babbling of so many old folks. Their brains are blank again, as at the beginning, save upon the subject of their savings, their estates, their banker's

books, and their various debtors. How edifying to hear a person in the last delirium urging his attendants to see that "So-and-so" be made to pay what he owes! "I've been too easy with him. Get it out of him by hook or by crook, or——" And then away flies the soul to the bourne of those whose god is their money.

It is so very solid and positive a factor of existence, this cash which we have, or long to have! I could excuse our mania for seeking it, almost at all cost, even if it were ten times as frantic among us as it is. If we all believed in the hell of past traditions, the hell of Dante and his age, as deeply as we believe in the need of our daily dinner; and if there was a weekly market at which our souls could be sold for so much cash down, do you suppose this market would ever lack attendants? The bird in the hand would seem to us so much better than a little torment in the future. It would, of course, be very wrong, and a very bad bargain. No matter; the smell of roast meats, and the pleasures of fine linen, and a dash in the world would be overmastering. We should not think of repenting until we, in our turn, were being roasted or boiled.

I remember seeing somewhere in Italy a grim fresco, in which the dead and hell were the most conspicuous features. The monk who painted it had depicted a number of luckless souls hugging their bags of gold, and flying away to torment because of their avarice. This was all conventional enough. And yet, if you had gone to the Father-Superior who ordered the painting of this fresco, and offered him a bag of gold to petition one of those unhappy, avaricious souls out of their pains, he would have taken the gold, and gone straightway to an altar in the chapel, and said a preliminary mass. Was he also not likely to be punished for avarice? That would depend upon himself, I suppose. If he took the gold to the treasurer of the convent, well and good. Then what was poison to the dead man might prove meat for the living monastery.

It must be a terribly enlightening experience, to descend from riches to poverty in this life. I have no doubt it would be the making of some men. There are those among us who will do nothing unless they are compelled for the body's sake to do it. Put before them the banners of glory; and they will only laugh. What's glory? they

ask. Will it double our income, or give us a new pleasure of the kind we can enjoy? Not a bit of it. 'Tis a soap-bubble, and nothing more. You hardly hear the shout of it ere the echo has died away. But when they are under the rule of necessity, they are in a different case. In working for a penny loaf, and a night's lodging, they develop faculties that may get them the loud and continued applause of the world. Without the spur, they would do nothing; but under it they can do anything. Such men ought to be coaxed to give away all they possess, and to turn up their coat-sleeves as privates in the battle. They would sacrifice their pleasure, to be sure; but what of that if they gained happiness instead of pleasure?

On the other hand, does not the world teem with unhappy creatures who, perhaps from no fault of theirs, have had to step out of their warm beds, and go abroad in rags! Instead of feathers, they must henceforward lie on hard wood, or straw mattresses of the consistency of wood. Instead of hearing in their ears the agreeable invitation, "Do you take soup?" or "What wine will you drink?" they have to put to themselves some such question as this: "Can I dine to-day?" or "Can I afford a sausage and a bit of bread?" Worse still, instead of knowing that the children are faring excellently in the nursery, endued in their clean white pinafores, and looking so sweetly eager to begin, they hear them clamouring for something—anything, to put in their little stomachs, to assuage the pangs of that queer dragon of whom they have been taught that they are the appointed domicile. Is it not enough to send them out of their minds? It does seem so. But it is not—or else we should have to build Bedlams almost as thickly over the land as churches. Nothing is more surprising than the amount of anguish, and remorse, and positive despairing wretchedness that a man can bear without paralysis of brain. He may think he has come to the very last straw of endurance; and the thought is one of comfort and relief to him. But anon he finds he has another pack put on his back, and this, too, he is able to bear in the strength of the delusive belief that he is at the end of the weary way. Thus what we think poisons us is a real anodyne to sorrow.

How easy and absurd it is to blame money for all the sins and wickednesses that exist! Weren't people just as bad as we are in the days when there was no

circulating medium? They were surely a good deal worse, and much less nice in the doing of their misdeeds. There is not a crime among us, except those that have come in with civilisation—such as illicit coining and forgery—which did not hold up its head quite as lustily in the good old days when banking accounts were not the vogue. There isn't much radical difference between sheep-stealing and the robbing of tills. A Red Indian could gamble away his wife and flocks just as readily as we can run through our fortunes—if we inherit any—at Monte Carlo, or on the race-course. Have you remarked, too, that this deadly sin of avarice, which is love of money writ large, is not mentioned in the Litany? It may, of course, be included in the general phrase "deceits of the world," though it hardly seems fair to call our pleasant pound-pieces by such a bitter name. The sin of avarice received important promotion in the Middle Ages; and for the most obvious reasons. If it had not been preached into execration over and over again by stout-lunged friars, whence would the builders' bills of so many churches and monasteries have been paid? And how would the reverend friars themselves have got the wherewithal for daily bread? Have you never seen two little boys in the street, the one having an apple and the other having none? It is policy in the boy without the apple to say all the disagreeable things he can think of about the apple which the other boy has; so that at length, if the latter little boy be as silly as the former little boy is persistent and diplomatic, it happens that the apple changes hands, and so goes into the stomach that seemed least likely to be made to ache by it.

We have all felt much hurt by that cynical saying attributed to Sir Robert Walpole, that every man has his price. Horace Walpole denied that his father ever said any such thing. Be that as it may, it may pass as a phrase peculiarly significant of our civilisation. Money is such a darling of the age that no matter how magnanimous the man, he must bow his head to it. He may in his heart cavil at it and its influence; but he can afford to do so only if he have a sufficiency of it in his banker's hands. If he be poor or dependent upon others for a livelihood, he must take up his position, cap in hand, before those who have more of it than he has.

It is said that "Prince Eugene was at one time so great a favourite in England, that

an old maid bequeathed to him two thousand five hundred pounds; and a gardener also left him one hundred pounds in his will." Here's a fine testimony of the accepted worth of money. It is the equivalent of gratitude, affection, esteem, and I know not how many more laudable sentiments. This old maid and gardener could hardly have thought that their legacies as such would make Prince Eugene very much the happier; but for some mysterious reasons they admired him so much that they yearned to give him tangible proof of their admiration, and so they put him in their wills. One would like to have seen the Prince's face when he duly received notification from the old lady's attorney that he was one of her legatees. After all, however, two thousand five hundred pounds is not a sum to be slighted. It is a year's salary to the President of a South American Republic, or the cook of a millionaire; and there are literary men and day labourers who earn less in a lifetime.

Beggars have, by certain romancers, been set on an heroic perch, as a class of people who are, oddly enough, independent of what are called the debasing effects of the love of money. One might as well congratulate a bachelor in his old age on having been free from the tiresome effects of being loved. Now and then, I dare say, in a devil-may-care hour of sunshine and high spirits, the mendicant in the country can afford to sit on a stile, and sing in contempt of all the Rothschilds. He, at any rate, need not bother his head about the state of the money market; nor has he the least anxiety when the Stock Exchange settling days come round. So, too, the old bachelor might rejoice that he has no bonnet bills to pay. But, good gracious! how long do these humours last? When the sun has gone behind the hill, or at the first spot of a thunderstorm, when he has an invincible yearning for a meal, or covets a warm bed with all his heart and all his soul—in any or all of these conjunctures the beggar's paradise dissolves into nothingness. It is a fine thing to be able to snap one's fingers at the world, and profess indifference to all things; but your mendicant's philosophy is apt to be like his coat and his breeches—ill conceived for the friction of very rough times, a sorry makeshift at the best.

I remember being struck with the expression upon the face of a ragged, middle-aged man whom I one day ran against

outside a banking house in a country town. He had that look in his eyes which one may see upon the countenance of young people during a very impressive sermon—a sort of rapt, sublime expression, whispering of high hopes and noble desires.

"What is the matter with you?" I asked him.

He was shy at first of unbosoming himself. He did not like sharing his comfortable self-communings with a commonplace mortal like himself. But when the glory had faded a little from his brown, hard-featured face, he whispered that he was only listening to "that there chink of gold." It did him good, the mere hearing of the sovereigns ringing against each other.

Poor old beggar! I expect, when the dream had quite gone by, he would not get much pleasure from the recollection of it. He fancied the lot of the clerks inside the bank, who were privileged to plunge their arms elbow-deep in bags of gold, must be one of surpassing happiness. It was stuff and nonsense in fact, of course; for gold is to the accredited bank clerk no more than the painted sweets in the confectioner's shop are to the pale-faced young man or damsel who dispenses them at so much an ounce. The pale-faced young man in the sweet-shop respects his stomach too well to make free with his master's London and other mixtures. He probably loathes the smell of candy and stale tarts which for ever assails his wearied nostrils. And so, also, the bank clerk respects himself and his situation too well to take other than an impersonal interest in the gold by which he is surrounded. He too, as like as not, does not think his line of life the happiest going. The chink of gold and the rustle of bank-notes by no means make a music of which his ears never tire.

People fancy that misers must be among the most wretched of living creatures. It seems probable enough that it is quite otherwise. An accomplished miser has pleasures with which the rest of mankind cannot sympathise. He may be an insufferable old scarecrow to the eye, and offensive in other ways; but you cannot say that his mind is in keeping with his exterior. You or I indulge in air castles which have no substantiality. Even the very foundation-stone of these agreeable palaces of fancy would cost too much for our pockets; but the miser may, in proportion to his wealth, build palace after

palace, as he sits with his head in his palm, and the piles of gold pieces on the table beneath his gaze, and feel that at a word from him the architect may set about the work. He has scope for an infinity of those pleasures of the imagination, which are said to be of so much loftier an order than the ordinary pleasures of sense. You or I marry, and the wrinkles come on our foreheads when we are confronted by the bills which are the inseparable attendants upon a wife of flesh and blood, and a troop of youngsters, who seem to be of elastic as well as flesh and blood. But your discreet miser marries in fancy alone, buys diamond rings and pearl necklaces for his wife's adornment without the responsibility of paying for them, and perhaps goes so far as to christen his children and set them adrift in the world, even though he have not a known relative in all the continents. 'Tis marvellous what gold and imagination will beget between them. Of this the miser is well aware; and he can afford to put up with the jeers and grimaces of the herd who are not licensed to share his joys, and who, because he himself is such a battered, unkempt, disreputable old animal, think his pleasures are like himself. How is it, then, that when he dies it so often happens that his money goes to hospitals and other charitable purposes? If he were the mean reprobate he is reckoned when alive, he would take a hundred precautions against any one profiting by his beloved coins after his death.

Men say that money is the root of all evil. Be that as it may, it is at the root of ninety out of every hundred intentions and acts, good or evil. It can't help itself. Our intercourse and polity are of such a nature that they depend upon money more than upon anything else. Promissory notes are a medium of universal comprehension. One cannot live without money—unless it be upon some desert island, where tailors' shops, bakeries, and banks are not wanted. It is a sort of symbol by which a man's worth may, in a measure, be estimated. Of course it is not the best of standards for this purpose; but it is one of the easiest, and therefore one which suits men well.

There is much, very much, in those words of Nathaniel Hawthorne: "It is my creed that a man has no claim upon his fellow-creatures beyond bread and water and a grave, unless he can win it by his own strength or skill. Ill success in life,"

he says further, "is really and justly a matter of shame. . . . Nobody has a right to live in the world unless he be strong and able, and applies his ability to good purpose." In comment upon which it may be repeated that his money is in most cases the mark of the man's strength or skill.

The root of all evil, indeed! That is a bad, sophisticated kind of stone to throw at the reputation of our unassuming pound-pieces. Then what about the asylums, the hospitals of every conceivable kind, the doles which keep body and soul together, the collections on Sundays, the subscription lists when famine, pestilence, or earthquake comes to ravage among us? Farther, what of our railways, our ships on every sea, our churches, universities, and other endowed institutions, our manifold industries, and the fees we give and receive in acknowledgement of good, honest toil? What, too, of butchers, and bakers, and landlords, and the other essential constituents of our ordinary life?

These are all the outcome of money. Civilisation, which they represent, is indeed money, more than aught else.

Schopenhauer was fain to regard civilisation itself as the root of all evil, or something very like it. But Schopenhauer, though a clever fellow, could see no deeper into a millstone than any one else.

A SPRING IN AUTUMN.

A CLEVER but cynical old gentleman once remarked, when discoursing about the so-called modern health resort, that, if the visitor to its healing precincts were not already afflicted with the ailment it was fabled to cure, he would certainly be plentifully supplied therewith after a season's sojourn, if only by reason of the surroundings in which he had placed himself. Perhaps some industrious person, with a taste for hygienic statistics, will set himself to work to test the truth of this dictum, and let us know whether people habitually catch phthisis at Mentone, or gout at Buxton. I do not yet know the full range of the cure at Sprudelbach, the watering-place I have at present under consideration, but I should be in no way surprised to hear that melancholia was one of the maladies it never failed to dissipate. In this event, it would furnish an instance in support of the cynical old gentleman's theory, for I know of no other spot of

earth where one might more easily catch a fit of the blues.

In the high noon of full season, Sprudelbach can boast of very little of the gaiety which Continental administrations are supposed to be able to infuse into places of its character. It is well ordered, trim, and neat; and the sun, when it shines, makes a brave show of the chestnuts and planes in the garden, round the spring of healing water; of the rows of acacias, tortured into the similitude of verdant mops along the footways; of the "Tivolis," the "Germanias," the "Concordias," radiant with white paint, and wreathed with foliage of hop and Virginian creeper; and of the smart uniform of the soldier-policeman, as he struts up and down the promenade with a frown of terrible significance for the little town boys who presume to romp about the paths designed and kept up for the stranger invalids. The band is a good average German band; and, several times a day, it crashes out waltzes and operatic selections with a vigour which ought to provoke some outbreak of hilarity in the listening guests, who spread themselves languidly over the seats round about; but to them it thumps, and scrapes, and pipes in vain.

Sprudelbach is a place where visitors, for the most part, go in for their cure in deadly earnest; and few of those present—what with their original ailment, and that superadded languor which, according to the theory of the local doctor, is the surest sign that the stewing and drenching processes are working wonders—have a kick left in them. They go on in their monotonous daily round from their meals, which have very little taste in them, to the dose of water, which has enough and to spare; then music, then more meals and more water, and so to bed. This round of days seems to satisfy them; at any rate, there is no demand for any further recreation.

Some years ago, the administration, not to be out of the fashion, railed off a bit of sloping meadow, and called it a lawn-tennis ground; but no flannel-clad youths and nimble maidens came to this lure. These, as a rule, do not affect Sprudelbach; and the ground is now used as a bleaching-place by the local washerwomen. The "powers that be" have seemingly resolved that their visitors like quietude, and have made no further effort to provide amusement. There is no theatre; and the performances of dancing

dogs, and conjurors, and Bohemian minstrels at the Kur Haus are mostly patronised by the townsfolk, and the abigails of the ladies who have come for the baths.

If Sprudelbach be dominated by melancholy in July, what must be its autumn condition, now that the warning of the season's difference has come and put to flight nearly all the birds of passage, and set the worthy innkeepers and tradesmen to work to count up their takings, and to prepare for their long hibernation? Every day bullock-carts full of wood crawl into the town—a sight calculated to provoke a shiver in those who know by experience what power a German wood fire has upon the cold of a German winter. The marvellous beauty of the late autumn has given to Sprudelbach at least an extra fortnight of season; but the end is now upon us. The shutters are being put up, and we, who linger on for the sake of those last half-dozen baths, cannot escape the feeling that we are outstaying our welcome; that our worthy landlord, ready as he was to greet us as coming guests, will be equally ready to speed us on our homeward way. Though the days up to this morning have been fine, the nights have been frosty, and the yellow leaves come down in copious showers, and take possession of those seats for which, a few weeks ago, there was such keen competition at the fashionable hour. It has rained heavily during the night; a cold chill pervades the air, and rises from the ground; and a procession of lowering leaden clouds is driven by the blast across the sky, giving warning of a further down-pour before long.

There is no need for waiting now to get one's glass filled at the spring; the ministering Hebe seems genuinely glad of something to do, for her fingers, and her nose as well, are red with cold. Some dozen invalids are shivering under the arcade as they sip their prescribed number of ounces of water. The peripatetic shopkeepers, vendors of gloves and wood-carving from Tyrol, glass from Bohemia, and rubbish generally, despair of selling anything to these poor survivals; so they have appropriated some of the garden chairs and, grouped in a corner, break the silence by talking all at the same time, fortissimo con fuoco, as only Germans can. Suddenly the band strikes up, staggering and uncertain both in time and tune, as if the bandmaster thought that care and finish would be wasted on rows of

empty chairs, and people who linger at Sprudelbach in October. It is a lively bit of Offenbach that they are trying to perform; but its suggestive hilarity only serves to deepen the circumjacent gloom. By a slight exercise of the imagination, the sombre waterproof and ulster-clad figures might be taken for denizens of Hades, pacing wearily up and down their shadowy groves. The gloomy kingdom could scarcely show forms more wistful than these, or a more depressing entourage than the gaunt trees with their branches black against the yellowing foliage, and the sunless expanse above.

Again a chill wind of autumn sweeps past, and a fresh shower of leaves descends. I wonder whether it has provoked appropriate reflection in any other breast than mine, on the long winter that, ere long, will fall on all who walk the earth, in spite of all the healing springs of Sprudelbach and elsewhere? Though not of an imaginative turn, the symbolism of the falling leaves affects me powerfully, and it comforts me to know that the premium on my life policy was duly paid before I left England.

I cannot say whether it strikes my neighbours in the same way; but, to judge from their dismal countenances, I should say it did. My imaginative mood grows on me, and I am firmly persuaded that we are living, not in the whilom Grand Duchy of Hessen Kaltwasser, but in the classic land of shades. Memories of the "Epic of Hades" steal over me, and I set about identifying certain of the appearances around me with the remarkable creations of Mr. Lewis Morris. Surely he must be Narcissus, that tall, slim, handsome young officer, gazing pensively down into the crystal basin as he sips his water, and vouchsafing now and then a glance at the blooming "brunnen mädchen"; and that handsome, careworn lady, English unmistakeably, who is absorbed in her Tauchnitz volume, never marking how her pretty, demure-looking daughter has found opportunity to slip away into a side avenue with that evil-faced Major Plutow, who, for some reason, has chosen to stay on at Sprudelbach, instead of going home to shoot pheasants—who is she if not Persephone? Next comes Herr Groll, the bandmaster, with his hyacinthine locks, his graceful fall in the back, and his brow habitually corrugated with a frown of "beautiful disdain"; it is plain as a pikestaff that this master of harmony, this lord of the unerring—violin—bow,

must be the Delian Apollo himself, though by sanctioning this trope we are certainly getting out of Hades, and trespassing upon Olympus. Herr Groll has always been an object of wonder and interest to me; of wonder that he could keep body and soul together, and a decent coat upon the former, with the salary he enjoys; and of interest because of a rumour which is current in the place how, several seasons ago, a certain English lady, rich and noble of course, came to the bath to cure an affection of some vital organ, and made matters worse by leaving behind her, in the keeping of Herr Groll, that necessary bit of physical economy, the heart.

She has never come again, my informant tells me, and every year the Herr Bandmaster becomes more and more gloomy. He certainly looks sad enough this morning, but that may well arise from the sombre influences of the season. He lays down his baton and takes up a Strangers' List, perhaps to search for her name. I wonder how many pfennigs he has expended in the purchase of that interesting print since his charmer vanished, even as Blumine vanished with Herr Towgood into the interior parts of England, away from the ken of the disconsolate Teufelsdröckh? Perhaps he pictures her now, walking up and down the laurel walks of some dull, damp English garden, like another Daphne; but, according to what Miss Warble, my informant, says, I do not gather that, were her Apollo to start out of the dark foliage, she would pray to Mother Earth to make her even as the laurels around her. She would rather cast herself into his arms, and beg him to take her back to music, and poverty, and Deutschland.

Herr Groll puts down his paper and prepares for the last piece of the programme, and at the same moment a vulgar little boy with a penny whistle blows a piercing screech of defiance. Herr Groll turns and looks at the little boy as if he would like to flay him. Of course he would. Is not this blast of the penny whistle a challenge to Apollo to meet a rival in musical contest; and is not the little boy the Marsyas of the hour? I have heard the penny whistle very well played and giving out very pretty music, and, remembering Herr Groll's late achievements, I am not at all sure that the trial, which seems to be impending, would result as did that gruesome one of the old Greek

myth. But the contest, if ever it was contemplated, was fated never to come off, for another urchin, at this point, launched a fallen horse-chestnut at the whistle-player; then came excursions, alarms, and exeunt fighting. This circumstance puts to flight my mood of mythological parallelism. These boys are undoubtedly of the earth earthy; so we are not in Hades after all.

The hour of breakfast draws near, and as I return to my hotel, I mark the post omnibus crawling up the hill, groaning under a mountain of luggage to catch the morning train. Herr Strumpf, who keeps a lodging-house opposite my bedroom window, is beginning to beat his carpets, and the air is full of pungent offensive dust, some of which finds a lodgement in my windpipe. At dinner, yesterday, any one who disliked beef and cabbage would have fared badly—a hint, perhaps, from the landlord that it is time for us to be going. The English papers are stopped, and the only compatriots of mine left in the hotel are Miss Warble, Mrs. Brambletye Bewsher—not on speaking terms—and the Anglican Chaplain.

I have four more baths to take—bought and paid for—and I ought, by rights, to swallow another gallon or two of water. I am told, moreover, that all sorts of evil may happen to me if my cure be not carried out in its integrity; but the prospect of spending another week in the chill desolation of my hotel, varied by the beef and cabbage of the table d'hôte and the society above described—to say nothing of Herr Groll's music—is one I cannot face. So I gladden the landlord's heart by demanding my bill, pack my trunks, and renounce the fag-end of my cure, substituting for it the cure of the London flagstones.

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